

## REQUEST FOR QUOTE # RFQ-RT-14-00019

### COMBINED ANNOUNCEMENT AND SOW FOR STUDENT SERVICES CONTRACTS

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of Research and Development  
National Health and Environmental Effects Laboratory

#### SECTION I ANNOUNCEMENT

##### DETAILS OF THIS ANNOUNCEMENT

|   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| <b>Location</b>                           | RTP, NC           |
| <b>Required Level of Education</b>        | Bachelor's Degree |
| <b>Anticipated Start Date of Contract</b> | March 2014        |
| <b>Rate of Pay</b>                        | \$22.05           |
| <b>Average Hours per week</b>             | 26                |

The Systems Biology Branch (SBB), Integrated Systems Toxicology Division (ISTD), National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory (NHEERL), Office of Research and Development (ORD) at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is seeking individuals, at least 18 years of age who have completed a Bachelor's degree in computer science, mathematics, physics, statistics, biostatistics, or a related field to provide services under a contractual agreement to assist in a project related to developing computational methods for the toxicological analysis of complex mixtures in biofuels.

**Students or recent graduates, who are EPA ORD employees, or the spouse or child of an EPA ORD employee, are not eligible to participate.**

This contract is expected to begin approximately March 2014. The hourly rate is commensurate with the minimum required level of education and experience, as follows: \$22.05 per hour for a student who has completed a Bachelor's degree. The student contractor must be currently enrolled in a degree program at an accredited University/College or a recent graduate within the last 24 months. The student contractor will be paid the basic hourly rate only for the number of hours worked and will not receive overtime pay for any hours worked beyond the 40-hour work week. The student contractor does not accrue leave or holiday benefits and are not paid for any non-work days, regardless of the reason. The student contractor is considered an independent contractor; therefore, Federal, State, Local, Social Security, and Medicare taxes will not be withheld. The student contractor is responsible for reporting income to authorities and paying all taxes.

The student contractor is responsible for all costs of transportation to and from the principal duty station location. EPA does not provide housing, meals or other living expenses while working at the principal duty station. Non-U.S. citizens may be eligible to participate, depending on their immigration status and the applicable regulations of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS). All non-US citizens must submit, as part of their proposal package, evidence of their immigration status that allows them to work in the United States. Students should possess a current US Visa and be able to obtain US work authorization in a timely manner if offered a contract.

Students without a US Visa are not eligible.

Academic degrees fulfilled outside of the United States must be judged to be equivalent to that achieved in accredited U.S. education programs in order to be acceptable for this contract. More information about the evaluation of foreign education can be found at the U.S. Department of Education's web site at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ous/international/usnei/us/edlite-visitus-forrecog.html>

If applicable, applicants shall submit all necessary documents to a recognized private U.S. organization that specializes in interpretation of foreign educational credentials, usually named a credential evaluation service. To be suitable, the foreign credential evaluation must include and describe (i) type of education received by the applicant (i.e., conventional, by mail, or online), (ii) degree of education relative to the U.S. education system, and testify that its comparability recommendations follow the general guidelines of the U.S. National Council for the Evaluation of Foreign Educational Credentials, (iii) the content of the applicant's educational program earned abroad and the standard obtained, (iv) the ranking of the awarding foreign schools' credit and authenticity in its own country's education system, (v) what the evaluation service did to obtain this information, (vi) the qualifications of the evaluator, and (vii) any indications as to other concerns such as falsification. Foreign credential evaluations that do not include all the above information or indicate there is not enough information on which to make a sound evaluation will not be accepted.

**INTERESTED PARTIES MUST COMPLETE ATTACHMENT 2, “STUDENT PROPOSAL FORM FOR RFQ-RT-14-00019”.** Please provide a one or two page resume or statement of qualifications, this proposal form and attach a copy of all your college/university transcripts (unofficial copies are acceptable, if it is apparent from the transcript copy that is a copy of an official document and that the school is identified), and submit to Jeffery Clodfelter, Contract Specialist, via email at [Clodfelter.Jeffery@epa.gov](mailto:Clodfelter.Jeffery@epa.gov) or fax to: 919-685-3008. The submission deadline will be listed at the website shown below.

Prior to applying for this position, you should visit the EPA solicitation web page at [http://www.epa.gov/oam/rtp\\_cmd](http://www.epa.gov/oam/rtp_cmd) to learn the full details of the proposed contract. Please follow the link to under the solicitation “Student Services RFQ-RT-14-00019” and read all of the attached documents. This website should be visited periodically to check the status of this procurement and to see whether or not any amendments (changes to the requirement of the posted position) have been issued.

The Government will make contract award based on all evaluation factors (student's knowledge and skills, course work, work or volunteer experience, research laboratory experience, research publications and grade point average as it relates to the services described in this Announcement and the Statement of Work). Evaluation factors will be listed in the website mentioned above, please check the evaluation factors document on the website given above. Personal or telephone interviews may be conducted with the most promising candidates. The Government may elect to award contracts to multiple students under this Announcement.

Questions regarding this student contract should be directed to the contract specialist Jeffery Clodfelter), at [Clodfelter.Jeffery@epa.gov](mailto:Clodfelter.Jeffery@epa.gov). Questions regarding the technical aspects of the contracted duties and responsibilities should be directed to Hisham El-Masri, the EPA technical mentor for the contracted activities, at [el-masri.hisham@epa.gov](mailto:el-masri.hisham@epa.gov) or (919)541-7584.

## **SECTION II STATEMENT OF WORK**

### **1. Project Description**

The Integrated Systems Toxicology Division (ISTD) is one of the three health divisions of the National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory. The three divisions are located within Research Triangle Park, N.C. The ISTD applies a systems biology approach to describe normal biological, homeostatic processes and to identify key events that signal departure from those processes leading to adverse health outcomes. Research seeks to develop an integrated framework across health end points through the identification of toxicological pathways. Many cases of environmental contamination result in concurrent or sequential exposure to more than one chemical. However, limitations of available resources make it unlikely that experimental toxicology will provide health risk information about all the possible mixtures to which humans or other species may be exposed. As such, utilizing computational models in order to make toxicological predictions is a useful tool in complementing experimental efforts which examine mixtures in health risk assessment. This project will develop mathematical methods to reduce the complexity of a mixtures model and increases computational efficiency using mathematical and engineering methods such as chemical lumping. The developed computational methods will be applied to a case study related to a biofuels mixture.

### **2. Description of Student Services:**

The student contractor shall assist with 1) developing of mathematical analysis for biofuels' mixtures based on lumping methods, 2) programming and generating code of the mathematical descriptions into biologically-based models using Matlab or other software packages, 3) Running simulations of the models to predict interactions of complex mixtures in biofuels, 4) presenting results of the developed methods in both oral and written forms. The student contractor shall follow all QA requirements for scientific data collection at NHEERL.

The student contractor shall perform duties, as requested, according to specifications and instructions provided by the mentor. Where appropriate, the student contractor shall maintain careful and accurate records in designated laboratory notebooks. These notebooks and all other data produced under this order will be the property of the Environmental Protection Agency. All necessary instructions and training will be provided by the EPA mentor. As indicated in the Statement of Work, the student contractor may be expected to participate in conferences and seminars.

### **3. Required Expertise, Skills, Education and/or Experience:**

The student contractor must have completed Bachelor's degree in computer science, mathematics, physics, statistics, biostatistics or a related field. The student contractor is required to have an understanding and ability to develop mathematical code using Matlab or other software.

#### **4. Required Background Investigation and Suitability Determination:**

Student contractors awarded a contract will have to undergo a background investigation, a check of FBI fingerprint files, and a suitability determination by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Upon receipt of the contract award, go immediately to link <http://cdx.epa.gov/warning.asp> and register with the Central Data Exchange (CDX) and complete the iBoard application. **Notify the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) as soon as this process is completed.** The student contractor must review and complete the requirements before beginning work on-site at the EPA. If a background check reveals information to indicate the student contractor represents a risk to the interests of EPA and the national security, the contract may be terminated.

**Students or recent graduates, who are EPA ORD employees, or the spouse or child of an EPA ORD employee, are not eligible to participate.**

#### **5. Description of Working Conditions:**

The primary duty location is the EPA facility in RTP, NC and the work will be performed primarily in an office setting. The student contractor may enter the building only during business hours or when a mentor is present. The student contractor will be required to wear safety apparel and to strictly obey all safety requirements.

#### **6. Duration and Compensation:**

This initial contract will be for 12 months, not to exceed 1356 hours, with an option to extend the period of performance for two option periods. Each option period will be for 12 months, not to exceed 1800 Hours. The Government anticipates that the student contractor will average about 26 hours of work/week by may work up to 40 hours/week with the majority of the work being Monday through Friday of each week. The rate of compensation for this position includes the cost of self-employment taxes for social security and Medicare.

#### **7. Taxes:**

The student is responsible for paying all Federal, State or local income taxes required as a result of income received under this order.

#### **8. Quality Assurance Requirements:**

The student contractor will be governed by the US EPA quality system, as described in the approved quality management plan for the organization where the student contractor is working. Approved quality management plans are in full compliance with the US EPA's quality system requirements as expressed in these two documents:

Policy and Program Requirements for the Mandatory Agency-wide Quality System, EPA Order 5360.1 A2, May 2000

EPA Quality Manual for Environmental Programs, EPA Order 5360 A1, May 2000

Work performed by the student contractor in a laboratory setting must be in compliance with the above referenced quality management plan. The Mentor is responsible for ensuring this compliance.

Additionally, the student contractor must be taught the basic principles of ORD Policies and Procedures Manual, Chapter 13--Quality Assurance, policies 13.2 (PAPER LABORATORY RECORDS) and 13.4 (MINIMUM QUALITY ASSURANCE [QA]/QUALITY CONTROL [QC] PRACTICES FOR ORD LABORATORIES CONDUCTING RESEARCH), and other ORD and EPA QA policies as they are approved.

## **Attachment 1 to Work Statement**

### **Agency Security Requirements for Contractor Personnel December 1, 2011**

To safeguard the EPA workforce and comply with Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12 (HSPD-12), Executive Order (E.O.) 13467, E.O. 13488 and Office of Personnel Management (OPM) regulations, the EPA requires the following:

- **For Unescorted Access for 6 Months or Less**

Contractor employees needing unescorted physical access to a controlled EPA facility<sup>1</sup> for 6 months or less must be determined by the EPA to be fit before being issued a physical access badge (picture ID). A fitness determination is, per E.O. 13488, a decision by an agency that an individual has or does not have the required level of character and conduct necessary to perform work for or on behalf of a federal agency as a contractor employee. A favorable fitness determination is not a decision to contract with an individual. Contractor employees must undergo, at a minimum, an FBI fingerprint check of law enforcement and investigative indices (see Section 2).

- **For Unescorted Access for More than 6 Months**

Contractor employees needing unescorted access to a controlled EPA facility for more than 6 months are required to have an HSPD-12 smart card, called an EPASS badge. Eligible contractor employees must have a completed or initiated background investigation at the National Agency Check and Inquiries (NACI) level or above, comply with all other investigative and HSPD-12-related requirements, and be determined by the EPA Personnel Security Branch (PSB) to be fit (see Section 3). “Initiated” means that all initial security requirements have been met (paperwork is completed, submitted, and PSB-approved; favorable fingerprint results have been received; funding has been provided to cover the cost of the investigation; and PSB has sent notification that the individual may begin work).

To ensure timely contract performance, the contractor must be prepared to immediately submit upon contract award the contractor employee information detailed in Section 1.c. This applies also to incumbent contractors’ employees for follow-on acquisitions. All contractor employees under a new contract are subject to the requirements in Sections 2 or 3; however, the time needed to meet security requirements may be shorter for personnel who already have a favorable fitness determination.

Contractor employees may begin work on the contract start date provided all applicable documentation in Sections 1, 2, and 3 has been received by the EPA and there is no derogatory information to preclude a favorable determination. Timely submission of contractor employees’ security forms and other required documentation is essential.

---

<sup>1</sup> A controlled facility is an area to which security controls have been applied to protect agency assets. Entry to the controlled area is restricted to personnel with a need for access.

A favorable determination may be revoked at any time should the EPA discover derogatory information that deems a contractor employee unfit. Contractor employees deemed unfit will not be allowed to continue under the contract, and the contractor will be responsible for providing replacements acceptable to the EPA.

The EPA may make a determination of a contractor employee's fitness at any of the following points:

- When the EPA prescreens the individual's security forms. "Red flag" issues include:
  - Having been fired from a previous job or having left under unfavorable circumstances within the past 5 years (or longer, depending on the security form questions and type of investigation);
  - Failure to register with the Selective Service System (applies to male applicants born after December 31, 1959);
  - Within the past 5 years (or longer, depending on the security form questions and type of investigation), any arrest, charge, or conviction that has been upheld for violent or dangerous behavior or a pattern of arrests that demonstrates disregard for the law;
  - Illegal drug use within the previous year, or drug manufacture or other involvement for profit within the past 5 years (or longer, depending on the security form questions and type of investigation).
- When FBI fingerprint results are returned to the EPA;
- When OPM returns the individual's investigative results to the EPA;
- When the EPA becomes aware that the contractor employee may not be fit to perform work for or on behalf of a federal agency. The contractor is responsible for monitoring its employees' fitness to work and notifying the EPA immediately of any contractor employee arrests or illegal drug use.

## 1) Initial Contractor Requirements

This section contains the contractor's initial security requirements, which must be met before contractor employees can perform work **on-site** at EPA under this contract.

- a) The contractor must identify a point of contact (POC) and alternate POC to facilitate security processes.
- b) The contractor must ensure that all foreign nationals who will work under this contract have a valid U.S. Immigrant Visa or nonimmigrant Work Authorization Visa. The contractor must use E-Verify to verify employment eligibility as required by the FAR.
- c) The EPA requires contractor employee information for the investigative and EPASS processes. Immediately upon contract award or anytime new personnel are brought onboard, the contractor POC must log on to a secure, EPA-identified portal, create an account, and submit complete contractor employee information: Full name (as found on employment records and driver's license), Social Security number, date of birth, place of

birth (city, state, country), citizenship, employee email address, EPA Program Office or Regional Office, and EPA work city and state. Note: Incomplete names, inaccurate names, and nicknames are unacceptable and may delay contractor employees' start date. Instructions and the portal link will be provided upon contract award.

- d) EPA will provide the login information for the portal. After submission of the contractor employees' data, the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) will notify the contractor POC if additional information or corrections are required. The COR's approval of the information triggers the investigative and EPASS processes.

## **2) Requirements for Contractor Employees Needing Unescorted Access for 6 Months or Less**

This section contains the requirements for contractor employees who are not eligible for an EPASS badge but who need unescorted physical access. The minimum security requirement is an FBI fingerprint check.

- a) Before the contractor employee can begin work on-site at the EPA:
  - i) He/she must be fingerprinted by the EPA; arrangements will be made by the COR.
  - ii) The contractor employee must satisfactorily respond to all questions/information requests arising from the EPA's review of the fingerprint results.
  - iii) The EPA must determine that the fingerprint results are favorable.

Once all requirements in Section 2(a) are met, the COR/PO and contractor employee will be notified that the contractor employee can start work. Contractor employees will be issued a physical access badge and may work on-site at EPA. Contractor employees must sign a receipt acknowledging responsibility to safeguard the badge and surrender it when required (see Section 4.b).

## **3) Requirements for Contractor Employees Needing Unescorted Access for more than 6 Months**

This section contains the requirements for contractor employees who are eligible for an EPASS badge and who must have, at a minimum, a NACI background investigation completed or initiated. Contractor employees needing access to sensitive information or otherwise occupying moderate or high-risk positions must undergo an investigation above the NACI level. The EPA will assign a position risk level to each position on the contract and identify which contractor employees are EPASS-eligible.

- a) EPASS-eligible contractor employees must undergo a background investigation appropriate to the risk level of the position occupied, as specified by the EPA; the minimum acceptable investigation is a NACI.
- b) Employees who have previously undergone a federal background investigation at the required level and who have worked for or on behalf of the federal government without a



break in service since the investigation was completed may not need a new investigation. The EPA will verify the investigative information and notify the contractor employee and COR if a new investigation is required. If an investigation is not needed, the contractor employee must still be fingerprinted by the EPA for an FBI fingerprint check and have favorable fingerprint results returned before beginning work on-site at EPA.

- c) Before beginning work on-site at the EPA, contractor employees who require a new background investigation must:
  - i) Complete and submit the appropriate OPM security questionnaire specified by the EPA via OPM's e-QIP system. Access to e-QIP will be provided by the EPA; the questionnaires are viewable at [www.opm.gov/forms](http://www.opm.gov/forms). Foreign national contractor employees must, on the security questionnaire, provide their alien registration number or the number, type, and issuance location of the visa used for entry to the United States.
  - ii) For a NACI only, also complete the OF 306, Declaration for Federal Employment, as required by OPM for any NACI and available at [http://www.opm.gov/forms/pdf\\_fill/of0306.pdf](http://www.opm.gov/forms/pdf_fill/of0306.pdf). Contractor employees must answer questions 1-13 and 16, then sign the form on the "Applicant" line, 17a.
  - iii) Follow all instructions on the form(s), answer all questions fully, and submit signature pages as directed by the EPA.
  - iv) Be fingerprinted by the EPA; arrangements for fingerprinting will be made by the COR.
  - v) Satisfactorily respond to all questions/information requests arising from the EPA's review of the forms or fingerprint results.
  - vi) Receive favorable fingerprint results.
- d) Once all requirements in Section 3(c) are met, the COR/PO and contractor employee will be notified that the contractor employee can start work. Contractor employees may work on-site at EPA while OPM conducts the background investigation.
- e) At a time and location specified by the EPA, contractor employees must report in person for EPASS identity (ID) proofing and show two unexpired forms of identification from the lists on Department of Homeland Security Form I-9. At least one of the documents must be a valid, unexpired state or federal government-issued photo ID; non-U.S. citizens must show at least one ID from Column A on Form I-9.
- f) Before being issued an EPASS badge, contractor employees must sign a receipt acknowledging responsibility to safeguard the badge and surrender it when required (see Section 4.b). Contractor employees must meet all EPASS badge life-cycle requirements.
- g) A contractor employee has the right to appeal, in writing through the contractor POC to the COR, the denial or revocation of an EPASS badge. If the COR believes the appeal is justified, he/she will forward it to the Security Management Division (SMD). SMD's decision on behalf of the EPA will be final.

#### **4) Ongoing Contractor Security Responsibilities**

- a) The contractor POC must immediately provide updated information via the secure portal when new contractor employees are added to the contract. These contractor employees must meet all initial investigative requirements before beginning work on-site at EPA. The contractor POC must also update information via the secure portal whenever a contractor employee leaves the contract.
- b) The contractor POC must ensure that all EPA physical access and EPASS badges are returned to the COR as soon as any of the following occurs, unless otherwise determined by the Agency: (i) when the badge is no longer needed for contract performance; (ii) upon completion of a contractor employee's employment; (iii) upon contract completion or termination.
- c) These EPA security requirements must be incorporated into all resulting subcontracts wherein contractor personnel working under the subcontract require EPA physical access.

## Attachment 2 Student Proposal Form

**STUDENT PROPOSAL FORM RFQ-RT-14-00019**

***This proposal must be filled out in full to qualify for a Student Service Contract***

**Full legal name:****Email Address:****Date of Birth:****Place of Birth:**

**Citizen of the U.S.?   ☐ YES            ☐ NO**

*(If not a U.S. Citizen, provide documentary evidence from USCIS)*

**Mailing address:****Telephone #:**

**Date of most recent college/university degree:** *(The student contractor must be currently enrolled in a degree program at an accredited University/College or a recent graduate within the last 24 months.)*

Degree:

Date:

## STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS

1. Total **YEARS** of college/university study in the required field (s) stated in the announcement:

| Field of Study                 | Total Years |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| a)                             |             |
| b)                             |             |
| c)                             |             |
| <i>[add rows if necessary]</i> |             |

2. Total **COURSE HOURS** in relevant field of study:

[illegible]

|  |                                |  |  |
|--|--------------------------------|--|--|
|  |                                |  |  |
|  | <i>[add rows if necessary]</i> |  |  |

3. **MONTHS** of relevant employment or volunteer services: *(give name of employee/service organization plus a brief statement of the work performed)*

| Employer or Service Organization and Brief Description of Work Performed | Months of Experience |
|--|----------------------|
| 1.   |                      |
| 2.   |                      |
| 3.   |                      |
| <i>[add rows if necessary]</i>   |                      |

4. **GRADE POINT AVERAGE:**

5. **REFERENCES** *Two references with name, title, telephone number, and email address)*

6. Attach all your College/University **TRANSCRIPTS** that support the summary information you provided above. Unofficial copies are acceptable, if it is apparent from the transcript copy that it is a copy of an official document and that the school is identified, listing courses taken, grades and overall GPA.

7. **Sign the following statement:**

**I have read and understood the attached terms and conditions of the Request for Quote (RFQ) and if selected I accept the specified hourly rate.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date